FOR MYSORE STATE

a Development (195 0) Department

SERIES.

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[Despatch Abstract.]

ural Reconstruction Scheme - Worki
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underlying - Explained

A NOTE EXPLAINING THE POLICY UNDERLYING THE FIRKA DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

The Firka Development Scheme is an attempt to revive and revitalise Indian village life. It aims at the improvement of the economic and sanitary conditions of the villages and is designed to creat in them an active interest in their problems and make them self-reliant. The Firka Development Scheme also aims at developing the spirit of co-operation in the villages and at creating the proper field for co-operative effort thereby organising the villagers for a happier and fuller life. It is the intention of the Government that the firkas and centres selected for intensive Rural Reconstruction work should be built up on the basis of self-sufficiency as far as possible, so that there will be a strong super-structure based on the co-operation of well organised units. Every endeavour will be made to create self-sufficiency in food and clothing in the villages selected for Intensive Rural Reconstruction work. But this should not be taken literally. Self-sufficiency depends upon the soil, climate and water supply. Soils differ and they determine the nature of crops that we can grow on them. It is generally difficult to fix up a village, firka, taluk or even a district as a self-sufficient unit. It depends on the circumstances in each place or area. Sometimes even a village might be self-sufficient. The intention behind the Government Scheme is, therefore, to turn out the maximum output with the minimum expenditure.

2. The nature of Firka Development work is such that spectacular results cannot be expected in a short period. It is a slow process. The neglect and inertia of centuries has to be removed first before positive and tangible results can be achieved. One should, therefore, appreciate the intention behind the Government policy. Since the Government started the work in 1946 an all round and substantial progress has been achieved in the matter of implementation of the intensive Rural Reconstruction Scheme. More substantial and abiding than the results achieved in the social, economic and sanitary conditions of the villages, are the intangible but none-the-less important changes that have been brought about in the psychology of the people but these cannot be definitely assessed.

3. The value of the work done under the Firka Development Scheme is ma times more than the expenditure incurred from out of the Government funds. The long list of works done under the Firka Development Scheme is a positi proof in this regard. Wherever Government had made a small grant of money, such a grant had acted effectively as a kind of tilting lever in obtaining a large measure of local contribution in money and in labour. In may villages several items of work were completed for which the Government contribution was only Rs.500/- or less. If the Government had not paid Rs.500/- the villagers would have gone on hesitating to take up any work. The Gover ment fund has, therefore, acted as a tilting lever very effectively. To assess the value of co-operation forthcoming from the villagers, certain statistics were compiled in respect of 31 firkas and centres in regard to which particulars were readily available. It has been calculated that in respect of these 31 firkas and centres, 190 road works have been finished upto the end of 1949 and it has been proposed to complete 142 more works before the end of 31st March 1950. 565 villages are served by these roads and 310 villages which had no connection with the main roads are now connected by these roads. It has been estimated that the total cost involv ed in the formation of these roads till the end of 1949 amounted to nearly Rs.8,15,000/- of which a voluntary contribution of the value of Rs.2,37,600/- had been made by the villagers in terms of money or kind or labour. The cost of road works proposed to be completed by the end of March 1950 works out to nearly Rs.7 lakhs for which a contribution of nearly Rs.2 lakhs is expected. A population of over 7,29,000 will be served by these roads. These works were executed under the Firka Development Scheme far more expeditiously than under any Government Department. In most of the cases lands worth thousands of rupees that were required for road formation were obtained free of cost. 430 wells at an estimated cost of Rs.9,61,800/- were executed till the end of December 1949 and it is proposed to execute 243 more wells before the end of March 1950. Several thousand charkas have been introduced in the selected areas. Several items of minor urgent works estimated to cost nearly Rs.7 lakhs were executed till the end of 1949 with a contribution of nearly Rs.3 lakhs. It is not possible to recount hereunder lists of works executed under the Firka Development Scheme. It may broadly be stated that emphasis is laid on the formation of roads,

digging up of wells, improvement of sanitation, intensification of co-operative activities, investigation and execution of irrigation projects, electrification of selected areas, building up of model agricultural villages, bringing into existence medical and public health centres, launching of live-stock improvement schemes, opening up of literacy centres, revival of village industries, intensifying agricultural programme, etc.

The Rural Reconstruction programme is thus an integral part of national reconstruction. It cannot be too often emphasised that rural reconstruction is a very slow process. But if one adopts an attitute of despair even at the commencement, then one can see no hope for rural reconstruction and this would mean eventually no hope for the future happiness of the country, for truly as Gandhiji had said that if the village perishes, the country will perish too.

M. S. Jagannayakulu,
Secretary to Government.

The copy of the note from pages 1-5 above prepared for use of the H.M.(R.D.) during budget discussions 1950-51 explains the policy underlying the Firka Development Scheme. May be recorded for purposes of future reference

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Rural Reconstruction Scheme - work in selected firkas and centres - policy underlying - explained.

/True copy/

SUPERINTENDENT.